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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method of processing invoices submitted by a professional services firm for services provided to a client comprising:

a.   importing the invoices in electronic form and storing invoice data from the invoices in a database as electronic invoices;

b.   publishing the electronic invoices on a computer network to permit access to the electronic invoices by reviewers connected to the network;

c.   using a quality control reviewer connected to the network, performing a quality control review of the electronic invoices to determine if adjustments to charges on the invoices should be applied based on non-compliance with billing guidelines set by the client;

d.   using a peer reviewer terminal connected to the network, performing a peer review of the electronic invoices to determine if adjustments to charges on the invoices should be applied based on the presence of unnecessary or excessive charges in the invoices;

e.   generating electronic client invoice reports, the client invoice reports reflecting adjustments made by the quality control and peer reviewers; and

f.   transmitting the client invoice reports to the client.

2.   The method of claim 1, the peer review step further comprising the peer reviewer entering text of adjustment recommendations into text fields associated with charge entries in the electronic invoices and entering standard adjustment codes into the database based on the text of the peer reviewer recommendations.

3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the peer review step is performed across a public network connection between the database and the peer review terminal.

4.   The method of claim 3 wherein the importing step includes restructuring invoices received from the professional services firm into a standard format.

5.   The method of claim 3 wherein the importing step further comprises scanning paper invoices into electronic form prior to restructuring.

6.   The method of claim 5 wherein the importing step further comprises receiving the invoices in electronic form from the professional services firm.

7.   The method of claim 1 further comprising providing client summary reports to the client, the client summary reports comprising analysis of invoice data associated with the client by time period, by service provider, by timekeeper, or by case.

8.   The method of claim 7 further comprising providing client summary reports to the client, the client summary reports comprising analysis of invoice data associated with the client by activity group or by cost/expense category.

9.   A method of processing professional services invoices sent by a service provider to a client comprising:

      a.   directing the invoices sent by the client to a third-party invoice processor;

      b.   importing the invoices into database maintained by the invoice processor, the database storing invoice data associated with invoices as electronic invoices, the electronic invoices comprising one or more charge entries.

      c.   publishing the electronic invoices on a web server maintained by the invoice processor;

      d.   providing secure access to the published electronic invoices to at least one quality control reviewer and, across a public network, to at least one remotely located peer reviewer, whereby the reviewers can review charge entries from the published electronic invoices using a web browser and enter comments and recommendations into text fields associated with the charge entries;

      e.   adjusting charges associated with one or more of the charge entries in response to the comments and recommendations

made by the quality control or peer reviewers; and

      f.   electronically transmitting the electronic invoices with the adjusted charge entries to the client across the public network.

    10.   The method of claim 9 further comprising storing client billing guidelines and service provider information in the database and providing the peer reviewer with web browser access to the billing guidelines and service provider information during peer review of the electronic invoices.

    11.   The method of claim 9 wherein the professional services firm is a law firm.

    12.   A system for processing invoices submitted prepared by a professional services firm for services provided to a client comprising:

    (a)   a database server including a system database for storing invoice data from the invoices and database software for managing the invoice data on the system database, the invoice data comprising one or more charge entries;

    (b)   a web server operatively linked to the database server and functional to publish at least some of the invoice data stored on the system database;

    (c)   an administrative console operatively linked to both the database server and the web server;

    (d)   at least one information transmission link operable to send the invoices from the professional services firm to the system;

    (e)   import software operable to import the invoice data from the invoices into the system database;

    (f)   a communications connection between the system database and a quality control reviewer personal computer to allow a quality control reviewer to review the charge entries and to add comments and charge adjustments to the invoice data associated with charge entries;

    (g)   a communications connection between the system database and a peer reviewer personal computer to allow a peer reviewer to review the charge entries and to add comments and recommendations to

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the invoice data associated with the charge entries; and

   (f)   a communications connection between the system database and the client, the communications connection functional to transmit a client invoice report to the client, the client invoice report reflecting the invoice data as adjusted by the quality control reviewer and the peer reviewer.

13.   The system of claim 12 wherein the communications connections between the system database and the client and the peer reviewer PC comprises secure connections across a public network.

14.   The system of claim 13 wherein the public network is the world wide web.